

REMARKS

By this Response, Applicant proposes amending claims 31, 54, 64, 70, 76, and 91. No new matter is entered by these proposed claim amendments. With these amendments, claims 31, 33-41, 54, 56-64, 66-70, 72-77, 82-86, 88, and 90-113 are pending, with claims 31, 54, 64, 70, 76, and 91 being independent. Of the pending claims, claims 40, 41, 61, 62, 88, 90, 96, 97, and 101-103 have been withdrawn from consideration as being allegedly drawn to non-elected species.

As an initial matter, Applicant wishes to express sincere appreciation to the Examiner for the courtesy extended to Applicant's representative during a personal interview held on March 10, 2004. During the interview, the Examiner indicated that, if the term "at least substantially" was removed from all of the independent claims, the claims would overcome each outstanding objection and rejection (i.e., the objection to the specification; the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph; and the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 based on Taylor (U.S. Patent No. 6,544,291)).

Consequently, Applicant proposes removing the term "at least substantially" from each of independent claims 31, 54, 64, 70, 76, and 91 to place this application in condition for allowance.

Since generic independent claims 31, 54, 76, and 91 are allowable, Applicant respectfully requests that claims 40 and 41 (which depend from claim 31), claims 61 and 62 (which depend from claim 54), claims 88 and 90 (which depend from claim 76), and claims 96, 97, and 101-103 (which depend from claim 91), all of which had been withdrawn from consideration, be rejoined to this application and be allowed at least by virtue of their dependency from allowable independent claims 31, 54, 76, and 91.

Applicant respectfully requests that this Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116 be entered, placing all pending claims in condition for allowance. The proposed amendments to claims 31, 54, 64, 70, 76, and 91 do not raise new issues or necessitate the undertaking of any additional search of the art by the Examiner, since all of the elements and their relationships were previously claimed. Therefore, immediate issuance of a Notice of Allowability is respectfully requested.

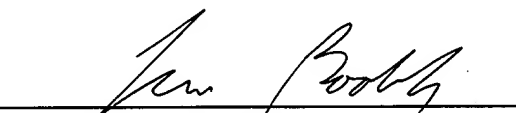
The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned (202-408-4140) if a telephone conversation might advance prosecution of the application.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this Response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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GARRETT & DUNNER, L.L.P.

Dated: March 17, 2004

By: 
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